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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 SARAJEVO 000704

SIPDIS

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FOR BEIN

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SUBJECT: BOSNIA - DODIK REMAINS DEFIANT ON RSNA CONCLUSIONS

REF: A. SARAJEVO 691

1B. SARAJEVO 687

1C. SARAJEVO 594

Classified By: Ambassador Charles English. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Republika Srpska (RS) PM Milorad Dodik on June 12 publicly reiterated his support for the RS National Assembly (RSNA's) May 14 conclusions that declared 68 competency transfers to the state level unconstitutional. Dodik insisted that the spirit of the conclusions would remain in effect regardless of any action the HighRep may take to annul them or an RSNA decision to change them in order to pacify the HighRep. Dodik went on to accuse the international community writ large of bringing down Bosnia, stating that the RS aspires to the "dissolution of a country that does not function anyway." Dodik's behavior precipitated the collapse of the Prud talks, as Party of Democratic Action (SDA) leader Sulejman Tihic -- responding to Dodik's vitriol and OHR's tepid response to the RSNA conclusions -- refused to participate in the June 14 Prud talks. Meanwhile, the RSNA published the controversial conclusions on June 15, thereby entering them into legal force. Tihic assured the Ambassador that he wants to be a part of the solution but reiterated that he cannot participate in Prud or similar talks until this issue is resolved. The challenge now is to deliver with the Europeans a swift, unified message to Dodik that his behavior is unacceptable and dangerous. END SUMMARY.

Dodik: "Conclusions Will Stand"

12. (SBU) On June 12, the day after the HighRep's deadline for annulling the conclusions expired (Ref A), Dodik addressed them in an interview for RTRS. He stressed that if the HighRep were to annul the conclusions, the RS would "behave" but that the spirit of the conclusions "would not disappear."

He noted that even if the RSNA converted the conclusions to a declaration, the message would remain in effect. Dodik also indicated that "some ambassadors" had privately intimated to him that Inzko's May 25 letter to RS leaders condemning the conclusions represented only the HighRep's personal views, not those of the Europeans as a whole.

Dodik: "Our Goal is Dissolution"

13. (SBU) Building on his assertion that the RS was strong enough to withstand the international community's efforts to derail the RSNA conclusions, Dodik went on in his interview to lash out at the international community writ large. He opined that the internationals are bringing down Bosnia. He

further stated that "I pray that no one will forbid the television show '60 Minutes' because it achieves our goal in the best way, and it will eventually cause the dissolution of this country that cannot function anyway. This is not a country. It does not serve anyone." He further stressed that "it is our goal to have the Republika Srpska as a complex, internationally recognized country. ... Bosnia has international recognition, but it does not have internal recognition."

14. (SBU) Dodik in his interview also:

- Credited himself with bringing pride back to the RS;
- Accused OHR of "trying from PIC session to PIC session to keep their well-paid jobs in Sarajevo" by orchestrating crises at the expense of the RS;
- Reiterated plans to bring a lawsuit against former HighRep Paddy Ashdown in Great Britain;
- Declared that PDHR Gregorian is a "failed diplomat" and "common skunk" who "will take after him a whole avalanche of charges" when he leaves Bosnia and "one day will be kicked in a certain place";
- Decried the dismissal of ethnic Serb State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) official Radoslav Jovicic (Ref B) and declared that "I do not want to live in a country where someone, whoever he is, can come and dismiss a man without any proof;"

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-- Declared the State Court and State Prosecutor's Office "illegal" and insisted that if he receives a summons from SIPA in connection with the investigation against him (Ref C), he will not respond to it;

-- Cited the recently released footage of indicted war criminal Ratko Mladic allegedly traveling freely throughout Serbia and Bosnia as an example of "an attack on the Serbs;"

-- Likened Bosniak politics in Sarajevo to the policies of Slobodan Milosevic, accusing Bosniaks of ignoring the needs of other constituent peoples; and

-- Called Tihic a successor of the Young Muslim Brotherhood and declared it impossible to work with him.

Prud Talks Collapse

15. (C) Responding to the RSNA conclusions, his frustration at OHR's tepid response to them, and Dodik's vitriol toward him in the RTRS speech, Tihic refused to attend the June 14 Prud talks in Banja Luka. He told the pro-Bosniak daily Dnevni Avaz that "when OHR stops the anti-Dayton activities of Milorad Dodik and the RS, I will immediately jump into the process of talks and dialogue. I cannot talk with Dodik as long as he negates the state of Bosnia and its institutions and when he calls for the violation of the Constitution and our laws." Dodik and Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ)-BiH leader Dragan Covic -- with Inzko present -- held the meeting despite Tihic's absence, but they did not discuss substantive issues and reached no conclusions. Inzko told the press that he would organize another party leader meeting before the PIC session.

RSNA Publishes Conclusions

16. (C) Our OHR contacts tell us that Inzko discussed possible solutions with Dodik on the margins of the Prud talks but that Dodik was noncommittal. The RSNA on June 15 published the conclusions, thereby entering them into legal force.

RSNA contacts have told OHR that the RSNA still plans to hold internal consultations to craft a solution, and then it will consider in the coming days adopting a second set of conclusions, which would mildly soften the first set (Ref A).

The HighRep plans to engage the Steering Board Ambassadors this week for support in crafting a viable solution.

Tihic Seeks Solutions

¶7. (C) Tihic told the Ambassador on June 15 that he would like to remain constructive on the reforms Prud envisioned, but he reiterated his public statement that he could not participate in Prud or any such talks until the international community "took action to mitigate the anti-Dayton actions of the RSNA." He suggested supporting an action by the SDA Presidency on June 17 to issue a declaration prohibiting SDA's representatives from any talks along the lines of Prud until this issue is resolved. The Ambassador cautioned him not to paint SDA into a corner by limiting its capacity to respond to potential resolutions to this impasse. Tihic then mentioned that he is under pressure to host a gathering of "true Bosnian patriots," who would form a congress in Sarajevo to press for further action on this issue. He estimated 50,000 to 100,000 participants. The Ambassador strongly urged Tihic not to heed any counsel that encouraged the composition of a large, potentially volatile group whose emotions would almost certainly escalate beyond control. Tihic reiterated that he is under pressure to form the group, and the Ambassador asked Tihic to keep him apprised on the sources of such pressure, pledging to work with the Europeans to deflate this initiative.

Comment

¶8. (C) Dodik is becoming increasingly -- and dangerously -- defiant and vitriolic in the absence of a clear response from the HighRep on the RSNA conclusions. We must engage with the Europeans to ensure unified support for Inzko in finding a swift, credible solution to this crisis.

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ENGLISH